

2019 a record-breaking year for Ontario's film & TV industry

Written By MARK PAVILONS

Ontario's trendsetting entertainment industry is maintaining its course.

Industry supporters are celebrating the fact that Ontario's film and television industry had a record-breaking year in 2019, with 343 productions. That brought in a whopping \$2.16 billion in production spending for the economy and supported 44,540 full-time equivalent direct and spin-off jobs.

This represents an increase in production by almost 15 per cent from 2018 and more than 7,500 new jobs for Ontarians.

Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries joined award-winning actress Wendy Crewson, award-winning director Sergio Navarretta, as well as industry leaders Jim Mirkopoulos (Cinespace Toronto), Justin Cutler (Ontario Creates), Theresa Tova (ACTRA), Peggy Kyriakidou and Jayson Mosek (UNIFOR), Angela Mastronardi and Monty Montgomerie (IATSE), and Michael Cerenzie and Jonathan Ahee (Stratagem Group) recently to discuss the results.

"Ontario is open for business, open for jobs, and open to the film and television industry," said Minister MacLeod. "These results show that we're building a business-friendly climate where production companies and production service companies can grow.

"In 2020, we are continuing to work with Ontario Creates and the industry to ensure producers at home and around the globe know that there's no better place to create content than right here in Ontario."

Ontario is a leader in domestic film and television production, and is home to a booming foreign production sector. The economic and employment benefits of Ontario's vibrant film and television industry are felt across the province.

The hotspots are across the GTA and cities in southern Ontario. Some of the cities and productions are as follows:

Cambridge ? The Handmaid's Tale, Madam CJ Walker, The Good Witch, Hardy Boys, The Queen's Gambit, Frankie Drake, Anne with an E and In the Dark.

Durham Region ? American Gods (season 3), Coroner (season 2), Titans, Anne with an E, Schitt's Creek, The Handmaid's Tale, Secret Society of Second Born Royals, Madam C.J. Walker, Spinning Out and Falling.

Hamilton ? Umbrella Academy, Mrs. America, Jupiter's Legacy, Titans, Locke And Key, and the upcoming David Bowie biopic Stardust.

Kingston ? DC's Titans, Murdoch Mysteries and Star Trek.

Mississauga ? V Wars, Self-Made, Designated Survivor, Dare Me, Shadow Hunters, Titans, In the Dark and The Boys.

North Bay ? Cardinal.

Ottawa ? Curious George, The Last Kids on Earth and Hilda (all animated in Ottawa).

"The government's commitment to growing Ontario's film and television industry means big business for Ontario and a globally competitive production scene," said Karen Thorne-Stone, president and CEO, Ontario Creates. "Our suite of financial incentives, over 10,000 locations, world-class crews, diverse talent, award-winning post-production facilities, and expanding studio space are a huge draw for producers from Canada, the U.S. and around the world."

Veteran actor and King Township resident Art Hindle has been a proud cheerleader for home-grown talent and resources for decades. Hindle is not only in front of the camera, but he's also vice-president of external affairs for ACTRA (Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists), the union of more than 23,000 professional performers.

As an actor living in a rural community, I take pride in what we as members of our actor's union, ACTRA, has accomplished in leading the campaign through lobbying to ensure our political leaders understand the wisdom in creating and solidifying the best tax credits in North America. When both domestic and foreign film/TV productions film in our local areas they bring needed revenue to the local economy.

So if you know a local filmmaker, show your support; it will pay off in the long run!?

Jobs created by film and TV production in the province include technicians (such as lighting, make-up, carpenters, set designers, set dressers and wardrobe experts), production managers and coordinators, location managers, craft services, post-production experts, accountants, performers and drivers.

Ontario offers tax credits to support film and television production. These incentives play an important role in increasing economic activity and job creation in Ontario while also enhancing the province's cultural profile.

In February 2020, the government announced a Ministers' Film and Television Advisory Panel, which will provide evidence and advice to the government on industry trends, challenges and opportunities to grow high-value film and television production in Ontario and maximize benefits for the province.